

Workgroup on Trash Burning
October 12, 2006

DNR Air Quality Bureau offices – Urbandale, Iowa

Meeting Minutes

Jim McGraw (DNR) – Welcome
(Catharine Fitzsimmons is not available today.)

Introductions (attendance list available separately)

Wayne Gieselman (DNR) – Welcome and thanks for coming.

Brian Tormey (DNR) – Solid waste management key points/history.

Mike Thompson (facilitator – Iowa Mediation Services) – Ground Rules/Expectations

- One person speaks at a time, cell phones, breaks, be on time, etc.
- We'll start with a round table to get your input, then determine core issues.
- What is the expected outcome? Everyone works together.

What are YOUR expectations?

- End the burning of trash in the state.
- Rural issues versus urban, need programs to deal with waste burning.
- Cost effective collection solutions so it really is an option
- Public education so people know health/environmental impacts.
- Rule making on open burning.
- Overcome resistance to change.
- Low cost alternatives.
- What has hindered this in the past - state/local issues.
- Implementation problems.
- What burning is acceptable?
- Priorities - Rural/Urban, density
- Is this more than burning garbage?
- What can be burned/recycled/disposed of? Complete stop will be hard to sell. Transition model.
- Scope of project – solid waste general management (farmers burying waste on farm land)
- Definitions – common definition of words/terms. (trash, refuse, etc.)

Questions about the workgroup process:

What is the end result of this group?

Facilitator – The workgroup's products will culminate in a report.

Will it be a consensus basis?

Facilitator – We will operate on a modified consensus model...generalized consensus with chance to give input. Won't be a total consensus, but objections will be noted and considered. Minority reports will be put out if necessary. Participants will need to speak up.

Expectations (continued)

- Enforcement, who pay, who does? Societal vs. individual awareness?
- Create “livable communities” Convenience, health, economics...weighing the criteria.
- Cost of healthcare – indirect factor associated with this problem.
- What is the research-based tie to this process? No- assumptions.
- Local politics – want someone to take the lead/responsibility. Hard to take a risk.

- DNR take the lead.
- Identify action items, funding required, and reasonable expectation of success. Including politics, enforcement, and education. Cost for implementation needs considered.
- What is success?
- Impacts on other states of any burning? Nationally? Globally?
- Impacts on existing solid waste management systems?
- How much waste are we talking about that's being burned...scope of the problem?
- Equity issue – cities have requirements. How does this tie to agriculture? Should we all have the same rules?
- What is the best avenue to pursue...legislative, rule making, locally, statewide?
- Identify information gaps.
- Look at alternatives to changes. (composting)
- Air Quality/Solid Waste blend of definitions, work together to create the same definitions.

Facilitator - You can see that we need to define the problem well. After the DNR presentations, we'll have a roundtable to get everyone's perspectives.

Facilitator – I work with the following motto:

SOCS

Situation – Legally, politically, environmentally, socially, spiritually, financially

Options- Need at least 3 options

Consequences

Solution

Situation – We're going to have some presentations first in understanding what the process looks like.

Presentations – See PowerPoint presentations (available separately)

*Air Quality Presentation

Additional comments: Air quality definitions are different from solid waste terms. This may become an issue later. The definitions were originally based on functions and legislation.

*Waste Management/Comprehensive Planning overview

*Field Office(s) Overview

Questions:

Trash definition – we don't have a definition of "locally recyclable".

What if not locally available?

of unincorporated areas? What is considered unincorporated? (anything that's not a city?)

Clinton – big city practices are based on habits, markets, enforcement, etc.

Are there national standards? It's left to the state to get values below the standard.

Could this help offset the new standards being put on farm fields? Non-attainment areas have to identify where the emissions are coming from. Have to offset by decreasing emissions that are identified.

What are the penalties? We'd start with a notice of violation. (certified letter in the mail of violation) If they get caught again then they may be referred for legal action with a fine. (fine depends on the violation) Money goes to the general fund program typically. If it goes to court, the fine goes to the court system.

Round Table Discussion. What do you want to bring to this discussion?

- Who is not being served by contracts or haulers?
- There are folks without options. Service is not available at a reasonable cost.

- Not really a consistency in price, what's picked up, and what's available. Residents have to work with the contractor on what's available.
 - Reasonable? Costs – \$0-\$45 per month for trash pickup.
 - Also have transportation considerations and landfill fees. Some are free but people still burn.
 - Restrictions on what's picked up. Some exclude leaves/yard waste.
 - Rates go up depending upon distance and landfill fee.
- Polk County, 23 years experience- there is a partial ban on burning, but some is still allowed. During times when leaf burning is allowed, people were burning more than just leaves. When these things were banned, money was saved on fire department trips, hospital trips, etc...
- Fire chiefs/marshals and insurance statistics would be good additions to the group.
- There's a correlation between burning times and number of admissions to the hospital for breathing problems.
- Polk County has a brochure, this has been tied to health department and non-profits like the lung association. The approach is usually rural...education and enforcement, but it is a public health focus too. (reactive, not proactive, enforcement)
- Linn County bans in incorporated area. They're trying to extend to other areas using the public health focus.
- People don't sort when there are certain things that are allowed for burning....it's easier to enforce yes/no rather than trying to decide what is/isn't allowed. (We have no idea what's being burned especially on nights/weekends.)
- Can't enforce proactive.
- Home heating doesn't fall into these regulations, it's designed to limit emissions.
- Landfills are closing, so cities want to legally burn old buildings.
- People don't know anything about the bad things that come out of burning. (For instance when people wanted to salvage things out of the building, the city wouldn't let them). Misinformation is out there.
- Watershed awareness is good, but air-shed info isn't being spread.
- People aren't convinced unless they're directly affected. (People still burned tires until the West Nile virus info came out.)
- Money speaks louder
- We need data on what's actually out there? Air monitoring on towns that burn versus those that don't? Would be good to get level of contaminants from burn barrels to show what actually is the health problem.
- Check of towns with burn barrels versus those who don't. Challenge would be to monitor the total and separate monitoring for specifics.
- Have we tested/is there a baseline?
- Would be better to look at health care facilities. Look for spikes in respiratory conditions during burning times (fall).
- Health risk of burning in rural areas.
- Hospital emissions? 1 ton of trash in burn barrel is equal to 1 ton of trash burned at an incinerator.
- Research is being done on the cultural burning impact.
- Statistically, medically show the increase of asthma and respiratory disease during PM and ozone spikes. It's a matter of determining what caused the ozone and PM spikes??
- There's a Minnesota study that quantifies toxins from a burn barrel. A lot of times the ones burning the trash are the kids...the ones the most susceptible. Would be good to look into that study.
- American lung association could help to get the research, awareness, and resources.
- Build on asthma walk.
- What's the status on burning in other states? Minnesota had legislation trying to ban open burning, a key legislator kills it every year. Some items were banned (plastic twine, other plastics), but they're still having trouble with full implementation. This year they're launching another approach to try to get burning to stop on the local level. However farmers can still dispose of waste on their land.
- Are the any states? Washington, Texas
 - Would be a good research to look at other states.
 - Texas is a property or lot size basis.
- What ever comes out of this has to be communication with the public.

- Emotional response - Woodward now passed a burn ban. After someone from the DNR came and spoke about the dangers the council passed it unanimously. The council was educated but the rest of the town wasn't educated. People keep doing it. ("tell the neighbors to stay inside") The neighborhood and some officers are against it. Mayor didn't recognize the history so everyone is against him. How do you change the mindset? (it's not a "right") People look the other way. Small towns get complex because of the "outsider" coming in and stirring things up.
- Educate public, police, fire department
- Identify hazards/risk.
- Education – need printed materials and face to face contact. Also educate the kids/seniors.
- Strategy – need options to deal with areas that do not pick up yard waste. (Bags cost \$\$) Have to make it convenient.
- Make garbage fee part of their water bill. They will continue to burn everything - they still combine it all. And they're paying for collection anyway....why aren't they using it? Need the MANDATORY convenient option. And they need education. (yard waste isn't picked up, but they have a compost pile)
- Build incentives to tie to recycling pick-up.
- Market to the public needs to be better. Reach out to the public.
- If the state steps in on anything then a brick wall goes up. Small town/rural mentality is hard to convince. Really needs an educational push to it.
- Woodward said they might as well get it done because the state's going to do it eventually anyway.
- The state has to be involved somewhere to get that enforcement to push small towns to change.
- Education? Face to show the problem (health). Pitching the environment doesn't cut it. Start with the schools and work up.
- Easier in cities.
- People grumble, but if it's the state law they've become accustomed to doing it. "Do the right thing."
- Do the 25% waste reduction mandates really show any improvements to goal progress? No real data to show the improvements. Consequences of not meeting mandate.
- Deal with inconsistencies?
- "Burning is fun."
- Mandated collection, etc. may become too much. Would focus on the trash burning/health impacts before we go farther. Down the road, that'll be good to look at, but for now focus on burning/health impacts.
- Scientific data? By-products of combustion and exposure to it. Short term and long term exposure. Can we get this data? Maybe there's a grant out there to study this? Acute/chronic
 - Pollutants bio-accumulate
 - Medical variability from person to person.
 - Climate changes
 - Synergistic impact
 - Dispersion
- How does health data help implementation, regulation, and enforcement? Good tool for education.
- Global climate change?
- EPA air quality - color alerts
- Health is paramount, but a face has to be associated with the problem in some way. Property/health insurance and fire department side has to have data of info from fires.
 - Cost to community for fire loss
- Multi pronged approach - Need to expand beyond just the health issues, don't limit to one campaign. Global warming, asthma, economically, etc. All of these things may be more effective for some populations rather than others.
- Look at the positive/reward side as well.
- It is intuitively obvious. Don't burn when wind blows it into own house. It does infringe on people's rights.
- Guerilla warfare takes time.

- Small towns want to be able to point the finger at the state. Good to have an overlaying push from the state to get to the next step. It's going to take a long time, but good to have something to hold over the communities.
- Lot size
- Use the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) as infringement on the right to breathe. Nuisance dispute.
- Trash – it stinks!
- There are alternatives. It's making it convenient/affordable to use and educational component. Can we provide collection to rural areas?
- Ideally if everything is picked up, there's nothing left to burn.
- Cost impact on people with fixed incomes. (\$15 is a lot for someone on a fixed income).
- Are we taking too big of a bite? Make it more manageable.
- Implementation will be slow, but start with bigger influence to influence smaller communities. Nothing will be instant.
- Residential trash? Produced in a household or zoning definition?? Incorporated or not? Some small communities - people move out to get away from town, but still want community benefits...utilities, no burning, etc.
 - Zoning based upon density
 - Is area incorporated?
 - Strategy – slow process
 - County control
- Look at banning burning that has the bigger public health impacts.
 - Focus it on density issue. (Farms are already looked at differently than residential now.)
 - Lot size
- Equitable – 30% of respondents still allow burning. We're only talking about 30% but that doesn't consider agricultural. If we enact a ban we still have to figure out how to change behavior. PR campaign, etc. It all takes time. Have a phase-in time.
- 30% still trash burning are a good start. And need to consider leaf burning too.
- Everything needs to be banned. It's difficult to separate.
- Good to give the communities framework/infrastructure to get it done...coming from DNR not just the city. Make it clear, fair, and simple.
 - Tools and education.
 - Model ordinance.
 - Press releases in papers/reasons why it should matter.
 - DNR presentations
 - Videos to educate K-12
 - Sample ordinance is a good idea.
- Start with regulating the incorporated, and, at the same time we're educating the unincorporated. We have tools to start at the incorporated area, and then eventually move to unincorporated. Should at the same time educate unincorporated so when it's their turn the resistance will be less.
- Pride in community will be more effective (reward strategy).

These fall more under Options/Strategies:

If we make it easy why not do the right thing, even if it costs a couple of dollars. (donate \$2 on income tax)
 If haulers were zoned then it's more cost effective for them (bid out to make cost effective). Polk county - billing system needs included. The city, county, or solid waste agency could bill the rural areas.

Consequences of if we don't do anything? What haven't we thought of?

There isn't a do nothing...it will get worse, so we can't "do nothing"

More rural living results in more complaints. (however rural people complain about other rural people...it's not necessarily urban people that are moving out to rural that will start complaining)

Do we agree there are health consequences as a result of burning trash? Yes, then as a professionally we're obligated to move forward to produce a product/direction.

Get past psychological phenomenon of "it's fun"

Land stewardship – burning harm

Better resource management, tie in to the bigger picture.

Budget issues? (Come up with the best option, then go out and get the money. Can't start out with budget constraints otherwise you're limiting yourself already.)

What if don't meet PM attainment - minimal

Categorized Issues (also called "strands"):

- Incorporated – density issue
- Unincorporated – Education first, how do farmers fit in?
- Ensure options are available (recycling, compost, pickup) We have lots of infrastructures for options in place - what else do they need? There are options, but also the question is, is it affordable? What's really available?
- Education
- Burning is a "right"/ Burning myths
- Land/Global issues
- Cost/Convenience of options
- Environmental issues/stewardship
- Health issues
- If people burn leaves, they'll burn everything. Definition of trash, should we ban all burning? Where do we draw the line?
- Consequences/Enforcement
- How burning affects the food chain?
- Resistance to change

Facilitator – Each participant is allowed five votes on each of the issues/strands identified by the group. Each participant may use their five votes in any fashion (all five on one issue, all five on different issues, etc.). The **ten** issues/strands with the most votes will become the **priorities** for the group.

Voting results on priorities (five subgroups will then be formed, and will break down further).

1. Health issues – review other state's and our materials to determine their applicability to us, and use to document why policy changes are needed. Also use to write policy changes. Investigate health materials related to burning, (EPA resources, Lung association) and use as education. Children and adults. Incorporate into education package. Build in materials in education process.
*Mark Warren (DNR) will look at other states' legislation.
2. Environmental issues
3. Consequences/enforcement (+/-)
4. Incorporated
5. Education/behavior
6. Cost/convenience of options
7. Unincorporated
8. If people burn leaves, they'll burn everything
9. Options available
10. Resistance to change.

Education may be a part of all of these.

Incorporated/Unincorporated is core audience.

Health/environmental results come out of educational program as some of the consequences.

Health issues – is it getting the information that's out there?

Health/Environmental aspects - Getting other state's legislation rather than re-inventing the wheel. Using it to help convince other people. And using it for writing the policy.

At the meeting on Thursday, October 26, we will break into five subgroups. Each subgroup will develop strategies for one of the top five priorities that the full group identified. The subgroups will then share their strategies with the full group, and get feed back from the full group. In the afternoon, we will break into five new subgroups, and each subgroup will develop strategies for one of the next five top priorities

(priorities 6-10). Again, subgroups will report-out to the full group and get feedback from the full group. There will be one DNR staff assigned to each subgroup. At that time, we will determine what needs to be done for the third and final meeting (November 8).

Next meeting's agenda (Oct. 26):

9:00-3:00, eat here

Welcome

Introductions

Update/Go through priorities

Work in Small Groups

Feedback from large group

Small group work